

A Report to the 46th District

Representative
**Phyllis
Gutiérrez
Kenney**



March 2007

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Phyllis Gutiérrez Kenney**
46th Legislative District

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Committees:

Community Economic
Development and Trade

Appropriations

Appropriations Subcommittee
on Education

Joint Legislative Economic
Development & Trade Committee

Dear neighbors,

Mother Nature has given us plenty of challenges so far this year, but the cold, the snow and even the wild wind have not dampened our enthusiasm for doing our best work in Olympia.

After a number of years leading Higher Education, this session I've taken on a different but no less challenging position: I am chairing the **Community & Economic Development & Trade Committee**, and I also serve in the **Appropriations Committee**, the **Appropriations Subcommittee on Education**, and the **Joint Senate and House Economic Development & Trade Committee**.

I consider you my partners in the quest to improve life in this wonderful state and the 46th District. This newsletter will bring you up to date on the progress we're making in the Capitol on issues important to you.

This session House Democrats have taken on an ambitious agenda in an effort to reach common goals. Inside this newsletter you'll find information on:

- Reforming our education system from start to finish;
- Improving health care access, quality and service for more Washingtonians;
- Boosting economic development through job creation across the state; and
- Protecting the environment for generations to come.

I'm eager to hear your ideas and suggestions. Your calls, letters and e-mails help me do my job better, so keep them coming!

Best regards,

A stylized, handwritten signature of Phyllis Gutiérrez Kenney in green ink.

Representative Phyllis Gutiérrez-Kenney



Sign up for my e-memo!

Send me an e-mail (Kenney.Phyllis@leg.wa.gov) so I can add you to my list and you'll receive periodic legislative news from my computer to yours. It will keep you informed about everything that's happening under the dome. You can unsubscribe at any time and your e-mail address will not be distributed to anyone else.

A Report to the 46th District

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One Education System

In today's global economy, we need to start thinking about education as a whole; a process that starts very early in life and finishes once academic and vocational goals have been reached and fulfilled.

So this session we've taken good ideas from the Governor, from our own caucus and from people in our different districts to develop a **five-point plan** aimed at eliminating the systemic pitfalls that keep many kids from reaching their full potential.

This plan is the result of lengthy conversations with school officials, administrators, teachers, parents and students. Every policy and every dollar we approve will drive one of these five priorities. Our goal is to have the best education system in the country.

The five-point plan:

1. Start early — Timing is a factor in the learning process; the earlier a child gets started, the higher his chances of success. We will invest in early learning opportunities and start phasing in all-day kindergarten. By investing in a child's early years, we provide a solid foundation for success.

2. Fully fund basic education — We've set a high bar for our students and our teachers, but we're not investing enough to help them get there. Now we're asking even more of our teachers, so let's make sure we're giving them the resources they need to meet their challenge.

3. Put an outstanding teacher in every classroom — We need to value our teachers. Research shows that the most important factor in student learning is a

quality teacher, so recruiting and retaining skilled teaching professionals is essential. Our teachers deserve fair compensation, increased time for classroom preparation and professional development, and incentives for joining the profession.

4. Help every student succeed and graduate on-time — Equal opportunity is a fundamental value of our nation. Economic status, race and culture should not be predictors of academic achievement, but currently they are. To eliminate the education gap we must direct resources to those schools that need them most, and invest in students who are at risk of not graduating.

5. Finish strong – make post-high school opportunities a real option for everyone — Education feeds both civic participation and our economy. In today's global economy, education beyond high school is more important than ever. Whether it's four-year college or technical school, post-secondary opportunities will help students gain the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in life and work.

We can make college more affordable through tuition policy, opportunity grants, scholarships and partnerships.

I'm once again sponsoring the **Opportunity Grants** bill. Last year the Legislature passed my bill to test the pilot program in ten colleges across the state and the results were overwhelmingly positive. The program has a 90 % retention rate!

We must continue funding the Opportunity Grants Program, which will produce more workers with the necessary skills to get the family-wage jobs that our employers need filled.

Funding higher education is the key to turning the economy around.



Equal opportunity starts with a high-quality education for every child, leading to a highly-skilled workforce and a prosperous Washington State.

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Community & Economic Development

Many regions of the state are thriving, but we cannot close our eyes to some distressed communities throughout rural and urban Washington. They need a blend of economic development and social services initiatives to boost local businesses and promote prosperous neighborhoods.

So this year I'm sponsoring the **Community Development Fund bill** (CDF), which could provide the resources needed for the economic health of local communities.

The CDF could activate and transform economically distressed communities and deliver financial and social returns in the short- and long-term.

To receive an award from the Community Development Fund, communities would be required to demonstrate long-term vision that links economic development, human services, and infrastructure together in a synergistic way.

Health Care Solutions

We need to provide medical insurance for thousands of low-income kids who don't have it, and help buy it for the thousands of working adults who can't afford it.

The problems:

- Health care costs are skyrocketing.
- 72,500 children and 520,000 adults lack health coverage.
- Without health care coverage, people end-up at the ER, which drives up costs for everyone.
- Workers with health insurance often lose coverage when they change jobs.



Kids first

We passed legislation in 2005 with the goal of having all children in Washington State under health coverage by 2010. This session I'm supporting

a bill to step-up outreach to low-income families and simplify applying for help from the state. The idea is not only to cover all children, but also to invest in healthier kids. I want every child to have access to a doctor and get immunization as well as other preventive services.

Among other things, the new bill would:

- Make it easier for kids to get health coverage;
- Promote better health for kids; and
- Partner with parents on nutrition and exercise.

Helping workers and businesses

There are many uninsured working adults who are living paycheck to paycheck and simply can't afford to buy coverage on their own. And there's another chunk of the population unhappy with their jobs, but afraid to look for something else because if they switch employers they may lose coverage.

So we came up with a real solution: a **public-private marketplace** for health care. This reform would use the power of the marketplace to maximize what we get for every dollar. This way workers, individuals and small business owners would get better deals for less.

- All health care insurers in Washington would be allowed to sell health plans through this marketplace;
- All of the plans would be portable, so your family wouldn't lose coverage if you switch jobs;
- No individual would be denied coverage, and the large pool of people would help make the plans affordable.





Town Hall Meeting

Saturday, March 17, 2007

Join Rep. Jim McIntire and me to discuss your concerns and ideas on how to make our community a better place to live, work and raise a family.

1:00 – 2:00 PM

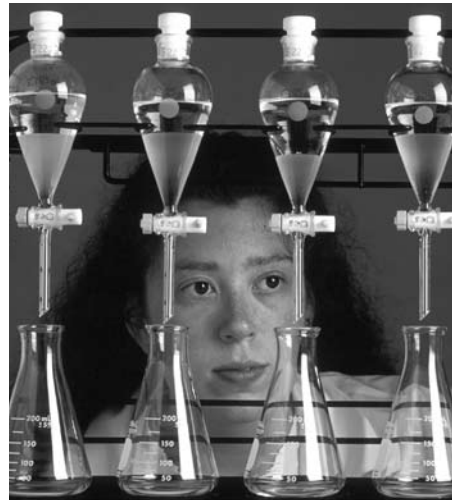
**MEADOWBROOK
COMMUNITY CENTER**

**10517 35th Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98125**

Representative Phyllis Gutiérrez Kenney

Clean air/Clean fuels Act

This session I'm supporting legislation to propel Washington state to the forefront of promoting clean energy and reducing air pollution. Twenty-one leading environmental organizations in Washington have made passing the Clean Air/Clean Fuels bill a top priority. It includes several broad-based initiatives:



- **Clean Diesel Initiative** - \$5 million in incentives to replace old school buses with new ultra-low emission buses.
- **Clean Fuels Initiative** - Promotes energy independence and reduced carbon emissions
- **Cut State Vehicle Pollution** - Requires state agencies and local governments to satisfy 100 percent—or as much as possible—of their fuel needs with Washington-grown biofuels by 2015.
- **Vehicle Electrification** - Creates a work group charged with making Washington state a leader in switching from fossil fuels to electrical plug-in vehicles and equipment.
- **Planning for the Future** - Funds research at the UW on the human health impacts of climate change.

I will continue working with my colleagues on these and many other issues – and I hope to hear from you.